

What is claimed is:

1. A remote control for an interactive television system, the remote control comprising:

5 a memory configured to store a list of contacts, each contact having an associated address for establishing communication with the contact via the interactive television system;

a display device configured to display at least a portion of the list of contacts;

10 a plurality of user controls configured to receive a user selection of a contact from the list, the user controls further being configured to remotely operate the interactive television system; and

a wireless transmitter configured to transmit the address corresponding to the selected contact to the interactive television system to initiate communication between a user and the selected contact.

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2. The remote control of claim 1, wherein the display device comprises a liquid crystal display (LCD).

3. The remote control of claim 1, further comprising:

20 a microphone configured to capture a first audio signal for transmission to the interactive television system via the wireless transmitter.

4. The remote control of claim 3, further comprising:

a wireless receiver configured to receive a second audio signal; and

a speaker configured to generate audible output from the second audio signal.

5. The remote control of claim 4, wherein the speaker and the microphone are further configured to operate simultaneously to provide two-way audio communication with the contact via the interactive television system.

6. The remote control of claim 5, wherein at least one address comprises a network address.

7. The remote control of claim 6, wherein the network address is selected from the group consisting of an Internet Protocol (IP) address, a telephone address, and a Media Access Control (MAC) address.

8. The remote control of claim 7, wherein the network address designates a second interactive television system.

9. The remote control of claim 3, further comprising:
a storage component configured to store at least one digitized verbal identifier for at least one contact of the list of contacts; and

a voice recognition component configured to receive and digitize a verbal expression from the user, to compare the digitized verbal expression with the digitized verbal identifier, and to designate the contact with a digitized verbal identifier that matches the digitized verbal expression as the selected contact.

10. The remote control of claim 1, further comprising:

a contact entry component configured to receive a user selection of a new contact to be entered into the list of contacts.

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11. The remote control of claim 10, wherein the user controls are further configured to enter a new contact into the list of contacts stored in the memory.

12. The remote control of claim 11, wherein the user controls are further
10 configured to manually enter the new contact.

13. The remote control of claim 11, wherein the user controls are further
configured to select a contact from a list being displayed by the interactive television
system as the new contact.

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14. The remote control of claim 11, wherein at least one user control is configured
to select a contact from a list of contacts with whom the user has previously
communicated.

20 15. The remote control of claim 11, wherein the user controls are further
configured to receive the new contact from list stored in an external electronic
device.

16. The remote control of claim 1, wherein the memory is further configured to store a visual identifier associated with each contact, the visual identifier being viewable by a user to identify an associated contact, wherein the display device is further configured to display the visual identifier.

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17. The remote control of claim 16, wherein the identifiers comprises a plurality of characters forming a name of the contact.

18. The remote control of claim 16, wherein the visual identifier comprise a picture of the contact.

19. The remote control of claim 16, wherein the visual identifiers comprises an iconic symbol.

20. A system for providing two-way communication using an interactive television system, the system comprising:

a remote control configured to control operation of the interactive television system, the remote control further comprising a plurality of user controls configured to receive a user selection of a contact from a list of contacts, each contact having an associated address for establishing two-way communication with the contact, the remote control further comprising a wireless transmitter configured to transmit the address corresponding to the selected contact; and

a set top box having a wireless receiver for receiving the address corresponding to the selected contact from the remote control, the set top box being further configured to establish two-way communication with the selected contact via the interactive television system.

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21. The system of claim 20, wherein the remote control further comprises:

a microphone configured to capture a first audio signal for transmission to the set top box via the wireless transmitter;

a wireless receiver configured to receive a second audio signal; and

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a speaker configured to generate audible output from the second audio signal.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the speaker and the microphone are further configured to operate simultaneously to provide two-way audio communication with the contact via the interactive television system.

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23. The system of claim 20, wherein the remote control further comprises a memory configured to store the list of contacts.

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24. The system of claim 23, wherein the remote control further comprises a display device configured to display at least a portion of the list of contacts.

25. The system of claim 20, wherein the set top box further comprises:

a microphone configured to capture a first audio signal for transmission to the set top box via the wireless transmitter; and

a speaker configured to generate audible output from the second audio signal.

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26. The system of claim 25, wherein the speaker and the microphone are further configured to operate simultaneously to provide two-way audio communication with the contact via the interactive television system, through the set top box.

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27. The system of claim 26, wherein the set top box further comprises a memory configured to store the list of contacts.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the contacts are displayed on a television of the interactive television system.

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29. A system for providing two-way communication using an interactive television system, the system comprising:

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a remote control configured to control operation of the interactive television system, the remote control comprising a storage component configured to store a list of contacts, each contact having an associated address for establishing communication with the contract via the interactive television system; a display component configured to display at least a portion of the list of contacts; a user selection component configured to receive a user selection of a contact from the list;

and a transmission component configured to transmit the address corresponding to the selected contact to the interactive television system to initiate communication between a user and the selected contact.

5 30. The system of claim 29, further comprising:

 a contact entry component configured to receive user selections of new contacts to be entered into the list of contacts.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein the contact entry component further
10 comprises a manual entry component configured to receive a new contact manually entered by the user.

32. The system of claim 30, wherein the contact entry component further
15 comprises a displayed list selection component configured to receive a new contact from a list displayed by the interactive television system.

33. The system of claim 30, wherein the contact entry component further
20 comprises a past/present communication selection component configured to receive a new contact selected from the group consisting of a contact with whom communication is presently occurring over the interactive television system and a contact with whom communication has previously occurred over the interactive television system.

34. The system of claim 30, wherein the contact entry component further comprises an external receipt component configured to receive a new contact from an external electronic device.

5 35. The system of claim 30, further comprising:

a set top box configured to receive the address corresponding to the selected contact from the remote control and to initiate communication between the user and the selected contact.

10 36. The system of claim 35, wherein the set top box comprises a broadband communication component configured to initiate communication with the selected contact via a second interactive television system.

15 37. The system of claim 35, wherein the set top box comprises an Internet communication component configured to initiate communication with the selected contact via the Internet.

20 38. The system of claim 35, wherein the set top box comprises a telephone network component configured to initiate communication with the selected contact via a telephone network.

39. The system of claim 35, wherein the interactive television system comprises an output device for generating audible output, wherein the remote control

comprises an input device for capturing an audio signal including the audible output, and wherein the set top box comprises a noise cancellation component configured to cancel the audible output from captured audio signal.

5 40. The system of claim 35, wherein the interactive television system comprises an output device for generating audible output, wherein the remote control comprises an input device for capturing an audio signal, and wherein the set top box comprises an output suppression component configured to suppress the audible output when the input device is capturing an audio signal.

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41. A method of providing two-way communication over an interactive television system, the interactive television system including a remote control configured to control operation of the interactive television system, the remote control having a memory, a display device, a plurality of user controls, and a wireless transmitter, the method comprising:

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storing a list of contacts in the memory, each contact of the list of contacts having an associated address for establishing communication with the contact via the interactive television system;

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displaying at least a portion of the contacts of the list of contacts on the display device;

receiving a user selection of a contact from the list; and

transmitting the address associated with the selected contact to the interactive television system to initiate communication between the user and the selected contact.

42. The method of claim 41, further comprising:

5 utilizing the remote control to capture audible input and generate audible output to provide two-way communication via the interactive television system through the remote control.

43. The method of claim 41, wherein at least one address comprises a network address.

10 44. The method of claim 43, wherein the network address is selected from the group consisting Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, telephone addresses, and Media Access Control (MAC) addresses.

45. The method of claim 43, wherein the network address designates a second interactive television system.

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46. The method of claim 41, wherein receiving a user selection of a contact comprises:

receiving a verbal expression from the user;

digitizing the verbal expression;

20 comparing the digitized verbal expression to a plurality of digitized verbal identifiers contained in the memory, each digitized verbal identifier corresponding to a contact of the list of contacts; and

designating a contact with a digitized verbal identifier that matches the digitized verbal expression as the selected contact.

47. The method of claim 41, wherein receiving a user selection of a contact
5 comprises:

receiving a selection from the user via the user controls to designate the selected contact.

48. The method of claim 41, further comprising:
10 receiving at least one selection of a new contact from the user to form a list of contacts.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein receiving at least one selection of a new contact from the user comprises:
15 receiving a new contact manually through the user controls.

50. The method of claim 48, wherein receiving at least one selection of a new contact from the user comprises:
receiving a selection of a contact from a list being displayed by the interactive
20 television system.

51. The method of claim 48, wherein receiving at least one selection of a new contact from the user comprises:

receiving a selection of a contact selected from the group consisting of a contact with whom communication is presently occurring over the interactive television system, and a contact with whom communication has previously occurred over the interactive television system.

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52. The method of claim 48, wherein receiving selections of new contacts from the user comprises:

receiving a new contact from a list stored in an external electronic device.

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53. The method of claim 41, wherein each contact of the list of contacts further has an associated visual identifier viewable by a user to identify an associated contact, and wherein displaying at least a portion of the list of contacts on the display device further comprises displaying at least a portion of the visual identifiers.

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54. The method of claim 53, wherein at least one visual identifier comprises a plurality of characters forming a name of the contact with which the visual identifier is associated.

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55. The method of claim 53, wherein at least one visual identifier comprises a picture of the contact.

56. The method of claim 53, wherein at least one visual identifier comprises an iconic symbol.

57. The method of claim 41, wherein the interactive television system comprises an output device for generating audible output, wherein the remote control comprises an input device for capturing an audio signal including the audible output,

5 the method further comprising:

canceling the audible output from captured audio signal.

58. The method of claim 41, wherein the interactive television system comprises an output device for generating audible output, wherein the remote control
10 comprises an input device for capturing an audio signal, the method further comprising:

suppressing the audible output when the input device is capturing an audio signal.

41. A method of providing two-way communication over an interactive television system, the interactive television system including a remote control configured to control operation of the interactive television system, the remote control having a memory, a display device, a plurality of user controls, a wireless transmitter, a wireless receiver, a microphone, and a speaker, the method comprising:

20 storing a list of contacts in the memory, each contact of the list of contacts having an associated address for establishing communication with the contact via the interactive television system;

displaying at least a portion of the contacts of the list of contacts on the display device;

detecting a user selection of a contact from the list; and

transmitting the address associated with the selected contact to the

5 interactive television system;

establishing a two-way communication channel between the user and the selected contact using the interactive television system;

capturing audio input via the microphone in the remote control;

transmitting the audio input to the interactive television system via the

10 wireless transmitter;

receiving audio output from the interactive television system via the wireless receiver; and

outputting the audio output via the speaker in the remote control.

15 60. A remote control for an interactive television system, the remote control comprising:

a memory configured to store a list of contacts, each contact having an associated address for establishing communication with the contact via the interactive television system;

20 a display device configured to display at least a portion of the list of contacts;

a plurality of user controls configured to receive a user selection of a contact from the list; and

at least one dedicated user control configured to remotely operate the interactive television system.

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